

1 CORINTHIANS

7:32-40 | STUDY GUIDE

Stay Single

1 CORINTHIANS 7:32-34, "I want you to be free from anxieties. The unmarried man is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to please the Lord. But the married man is anxious about worldly things, how to please his wife, and his interests are divided." (ESV)

- "Free from anxieties"
 - Not the same as "worry"
 - ἀμέριμνος vs μεριμνάω
 - The definitions are similar, but if we read in context, Paul repeatedly tells us that he is not condemning the married
 - Anxiety = concern or care
- "Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?" (Matthew 6:25, NKJV)
 - A husband should care for his wife, and a wife her husband; Paul doesn't say this as a judgement, but simply a statement of fact

1 CORINTHIANS 7:35, "I say this for your own benefit, not to lay any restraint upon you, but to promote good order and to secure your undivided devotion to the Lord." (ESV)

- Priority → God

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- Paul promotes a proper order
 - Roman Catholics require celibacy, even of those who are not necessarily “gifted,” whereas many Protestants will not trust, let alone ordain, those who are unmarried
 - Consider balance Paul stresses

1 CORINTHIANS 7:36, “If anyone thinks that he is not behaving properly toward his betrothed, if his passions are strong, and it has to be, let him do as he wishes: let them marry—it is no sin.” (ESV)

- Betrothed
 - Parents responsible for arranging marriages
 - Ingrained in the culture

1 CORINTHIANS 7:39, “A wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord.” (ESV)

- Marriage □ for life
- Remarriage must be “in the Lord”
 - Paul’s view countercultural
 - “Yet in my judgment she is happier if she remains as she is. And I think that I too have the Spirit of God.” (7:40)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: Bruce W. Winter, *After Paul Left Corinth*, Timothy Brookins, *Corinthian Wisdom*, *Stoic Philosophy, and the Ancient Economy*, Craig Keener, *1-2 Corinthians*, N.T. Wright, *The New Testament in Its World*